



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL AND ISRAEL IDONIJE ISSUE FRIENDLY CHALLENGE TO "RAHM'S READERS"

If Children Read 2 Million Books This Summer, Mayor and Idonije Will Participate in the Annual Chicago "Polar Plunge"

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Bears star Israel Idonije today issued a friendly challenge to the children participating in "Rahm's Readers" as part of the start of the first citywide Chicago Summer of Learning: if they read a total of 2 million books, the Mayor, Idonije and Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon will jump into Lake Michigan during the annual Chicago Polar Plunge benefitting the Special Olympics. Last summer, Rahm's Readers read a total of 1.5 million books.

"When we set high expectations for our children, we have seen time and again that they can exceed them, and we're doing that today with a friendly challenge," said Mayor Emanuel. "If Chicago's readers finish 2 million books this summer, Israel and I will do the Polar Plunge in Lake Michigan. It gives new meaning to the phrase "reading is cool.""

The annual Rahm's Readers summer program, newly expanded this year, serves as a cornerstone of the city-wide Summer of Learning initiative, which recognizes that student learning happens outside of school and gives learners digital recognition that communicates the skills they have developed. Chicago is first city to pilot such a citywide digital badge system across hundreds of organizations and learning opportunities to visually represent and reward students' achievements. Chicago Summer of Learning has more than 100 local and national organizations offering opportunities to earn badges, with more than 1,000 badge-earning possibilities— across Chicago's communities and connected to the world online.

Rahm's Readers runs from June 17 through August 10 and is privately funded through the Chicago Public Library Foundation and sponsored by the James and Madeleine McMullan Family Foundation, Cubs Care, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Kraft Foods Foundation, Macy's Foundation, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Helen M. Harrison Foundation, RR Donnelley, ComEd, RPM Advertising and the Pearson Foundation. The program is presented in partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry, the Art Institute of Chicago, Goodman Theatre, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools and the National Summer Learning Association.

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Last year more than 2,800 people participated in the annual Polar Plunge benefitting the Special Olympics, raising \$900,000. The 2014 Polar Plunge is scheduled for Sunday, March 2, 2014. Special Olympics Games began in Chicago at Soldier Field back in 1968 and serves thousands of Chicago athletes. Chicago Special Olympics operates in the Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Schools from funds raised by the Special Children's Charities.

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